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Editor-in-Chief:

Sukhdeep Singh

Editors:Siddhant Pattanaik
Sukanya Mahata**Team of Writers:**Rohan Noronha
Agnivo Niyogi**Contributors:**Vernon O'Reilly Ramesar
Victor
Dr. Himadri Roy
Arnab Allen
Karan Sood
RJ Raw
Sambhav K Sharma
Gaurav Deka
Kareem Khubchandani**Design:**Peeyush Jain
Pawan Koserwal
Subham Bose Roy**Web:**

Apurv Gupta

Cover Photo:

Sonali Roy

Marketing & Advertising:

Divir Tiwari

Published from:
Kolkata, India**Email:**

editor@gaylaxymag.com

Website:

www.gaylaxymag.com

For business and advertising enquiries,
Contact us at :

adv@gaylaxymag.com

Editor's Note

Summer's here and things are heating up for gay pride in June in various cities across the world and India as well. The last two months saw quite a few ups and downs as Supreme Court judges sat down to hear the arguments for and against decriminalization of homosexuality. The religious bodies stuck to the argument that homosexuality is "unnatural" and "against Indian culture". The proceedings were closely followed by the entire LGBT community. Now that the hearings are over, the final verdict on the matter is being awaited with bated breath.

But will the mere decriminalization of homosexuality bring about a change radically? This is one aspect that the cover story of this issue explores. As Dr. Himadri Roy points out through the various cases of gay-hate crimes in the past and present that have been committed in Delhi, the homophobic attitude of the society will take a long time to change, and until it does, it is the responsibility of the Indian Government to ensure protection of its citizens and not succumb to pressure from right-wing or religious groups.

While there is still time for gay prides to happen, another colourful and big event is knocking on our doors. Yes, Kashish – the International Queer Film Festival held in Mumbai- starts from May 23rd. Block your dates for it, since the festival has grown bigger each year and boasts of an ensemble of interesting movies. We also held an online debate in association with NextGen India on the topic, "Has Indian Govt. made a mockery of the homosexuality issue?" If you missed out on the debate, you can still check out the transcript on our website. An Indian video on the lines of S**t People Say has been doing the rounds of internet. Kareem writes about his experience of making the video 'S**t Gay Desi Boys Say'. We have also published some of the entries that we received for the photo contest 'Colours of Freedom' and also announce the winners of the contest.

That is all from my side. Explore the issue and do write back to us telling us what you liked (or disliked) and what you would like us to cover in the future issues.

Love,

Sukhi



Sukhiman

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LIVING ON THE FRINGE

Despite decriminalisation of homosexuality, Delhi hasn't become a safe city and crimes against gays keep happening. **Dr. Himadri Roy** writes about some cases that received wide media coverage

Ever since homosexuality was decriminalized in 2009 by Delhi High Court, there has been some confusion pertaining to whether the ruling applies to the whole country or is restricted to the national capital. As legal experts later pointed out, the verdict was applicable across the nation. Still, it was widely believed that Delhi is a safe city for the LGBT community because of this historical judgment decriminalizing consensual sex among adult gay men, which

would be applicable without any confusion.

However, going by the various attacks on members of the LGBT community in the recent months that was covered in the print news media, the gruesome truth remains that despite the verdict, gay bashing continues in the city and police have done little to stop it. Gay bashing isn't new to this city, it had been happening for a long time, since 80s when the Sikhs were

attacked. But very few cases were registered as FIRs and the media coverage was controlled by the monopolization of the contemporary government.

In December 24, 2002, the dead body of Sagar Gupta, 26, a resident of Shahdara, was recovered from the dilapidated building at the crossing of Barakhamba Marg and Tolstoy Marg. It was found that the corpse was two days old. A suicide note was recovered

from the site which mentioned about Sagar having an affair with another unnamed guy who dumped him because he was not highly educated for another well-qualified guy. The torture of losing his boy friend was not acceptable to Sagar. The suicide case was filed at Parliament Street Police Station, but shelved soon and till date no arrests were made.

Narendra Rawat, 24, was brutally murdered by chopping of his genitals and his headless body was recovered from an unused bus of the Sarai Kale Khan Bus Depot. It was found that he was sodomized. The murder case was registered, but this case has also never

been solved for the media was unaware of these two incidents.

But Pushkin Chandra, 38, who was a retired IAS officer's son, and his friend, Kuldeep, were murdered on August 13, 2004, at his residence in Anand Lok of South Delhi. It got a huge media coverage. Being a powerful person's son, the cops took a note of it immediately and arrested four men Moti, 26, Rajesh Rekwar, 27, Munna, 24, and Jai Kishore, 26. Later, the Delhi High Court acquitted Munna and Jai Kishore for lack of proof, but both Moti and Rajesh were given life sentence, relying on the 38 witnesses, including

Hare Ram, the domestic help at Chandra's residence.

The same year Naz foundation filed a PIL at Delhi High Court against Section 377 for decriminalizing LGBT people from these forms of gay-bashing.

Media slowly picked this issue up in their everyday newspaper. News Magazines also covered them in details. **Hindustan Times** in their Sunday Magazine of 29 August, 2004, covered news on the topic of growing up as a gay man. Similarly **India Today**, in their issue published on September 20, 2004, carried out a sex survey throughout Indian males. It brought into notice of the public that around 19% of Indian men had homosexual experiences in their lives. But after two years, November 13, 2006 issue, the same magazine came out with revealing facts of single young men during their sex survey. There was a rise of 6% of homosexual practices amongst young Indian males, it rose from **31% to 37% within two years**. In the same year, Outlook came out with another sex survey where men and women were focused at the same time. It brought out another fact in public domain that **20%** of people living in cities had same sex experience in one year, and **23%** of this average was in the Metro cities.

In that same year, another double murder case was registered in Shaheen Bagh of south Delhi, on May 8, 2006. Both **Hindustan Times** and **Times of India** brought out the news after two days. *The accused, Mohammad Wasim, 23, was arrested for the*



murder of Akhtar Afindi, 52, and Jamshed Alam, 32, after Qasim, Akhtar's neighbor, revealed as a witness of seeing them entering his house. Wasim confessed that he was involved in a homosexual relationship with both the victims. Jamshed was his co-conspirator for murdering Akhtar, who was a moneylender and Wasim was his recovery agent, but due to some dispute between the two –Jamshed and Wasim, Wasim strangled Jamshed also for Rs.20,000/- robbed from Akhtar's bedroom.

Then came the queer liberation of India's historical date, 29 July, 2009, the judgment was drawn in favor of the LGBT community. But gay bashing didn't stop there. For few months, the excitement was so high that people from the community and the NGOs working for their liberation didn't take much note of gay bashings. Numerous cases have been reported in the print media.

On May 21, 2011, Ram Lakhan from Samastipur, Bihar, was murdered by axe, and his material possessions went missing. FIR at Kanjhawala, Outer Delhi, was lodged and three persons were accused, one of them being his gay partner Sanjay alias Gandhi, 24. Virender Pandit and Sanjay were arrested on June 7, 2011 and the other accused is still absconding.

Similarly on August 29, 2011, a garment manufacturer, Narender Narang, 44, was brutally murdered by two men, Pradeep Kishore, 21, and Kamal Kishore, 19, after

having sex with him. They took away Rs.50,000/- cash and Narang's mobile phone. The case was solved only on September 22.

On 5th January, 2012, Balbir Krishan, an artist who is differently-abled, exhibited his paintings "Out Here and Now", and was attacked by a fundamentalist group at 10:30 am. His creative ability was distorted just by few people. The media covered it vehemently.

And the latest, Sunil Gupta's photography exhibition called "Sun City and other Stories" opened on 23rd March, 2012, was called off that day itself. The media took three days to cover this news, until Tuesday, 27th March.

These news unfold such a heinous and horrendous reality which most of us are aware of – gay bashing. In fact, gays have to encounter such real life incidents in their lives in this country –whether in terms of threat, extortion, attack or murder. Every moment of life seems to be lived on tenterhooks of the majoritarian's diktat. They cannot rebel because the law doesn't provide them that space of freedom in this country even after 60 years of independence.

Whether gays live a life in closet or openly declare their sexuality, they have to undergo the terrorizing effect of family and society at large. In some cases, a gay child, after coming out to the parents, is dragged to a psychiatrist for medical help, and in some extreme cases,



electric shocks are also given. Hindustan Times in its November 27, 2011 edition carried out an article on "unhappy parents looking to cure their gay kids". Dr. Pulkit Sharma, clinical psychiatrist at VIMHANS, says, "People playing the(se) political and legal battles are being insensitive to emotions and mental helath of gays. They are causing extreme trauma." Another psychiatrist, Dr. Aadesh Srivastava supports Dr. Sharma's point and adds to it, "LGBT people are living in fear, and most vulnerable of them have become suicidal."

Even as we await the final verdict from the Supreme Court on this matter, these cases highlight an important aspect, that mere legalization of homosexuality will do little to change things at the ground level. The State should also ensure that there is enough protection granted to sexual minorities as well, and discrimination based on sexual orientation or identity be done away with. Above all, a nation-wide sensitization and awareness program by the Indian government to protect the interest of sexual minorities is the need of the hour.

FREEPRIDE

Vernon O'Reilly Ramesar talks to the founder of freepride.org, the leading LGBT online portal of Trinidad & Tobago

Trinidad & Tobago is the most southerly island in the Caribbean with a thriving economy that is largely based on natural gas and oil. The population of around 1.3 million is almost evenly split between descendants of African slaves and those of East Indian indentured workers. Although there are laws against homosexual sex on the statute books in T&T, there have been no recent cases of them being enforced. Over the years the LGBT community has become more visible and there are now lobby groups such as CAISO (the Coalition Advocating for the Inclusion of Sexual Orientation) working to amend the outdated legislation. Unlike Jamaica, where homophobia and homophobic violence are part of daily life, T&T is generally a more accepting culture and acts of violence against the LGBT community are rare.

A major factor in the growing visibility of the LGBT community is the advent of social networking which Trinidadians have embraced with open arms. The LGBT community has leveraged this new technology especially well and it has become a strong tool for community building. The online site Freepride.org is attempting to position itself as the online portal for all things LGBT. Gaylaxy spoke to founder Brandon Kalyan about the site and the current state of the LGBT community in Trinidad and Tobago.

GAYLAXY: What are the challenges of being young and gay in T&T in 2012 in terms of social acceptance?



Brandon Kalyan

B.K: Stigma - In Trinidad & Tobago, due to a lack of sexuality-education, religious ties, vilification and cultural norms acceptability; in my experiences and knowledge that sexual prejudice, personal bias and widespread allegations/assumptions creates a difficult space to feel welcomed, healthy and non-conspicuous. The culture tends to play on acting first and asking questions later, and when the questions are asked, it proves unnecessary because it almost always ends with the same detrimental results otherwise. Youths who struggle with their sexuality often at times brood in their own turmoil like a poison, because when the figures- that are intended to be better suited to rely-on for guidance, support and unbiased opinion- are available, it is often undermined, antagonistic

and/or bring forward even worse results.

Inferiority Position - A major obstacle in my experience happens to be that sexuality becomes a stuck out sore thumb. That no matter the quality of character, behavior, achievements and success, a person who does experience same-sex attraction would always be observed as being "gay/queer/expletive" first, then if lucky the conversation sways. But I would not like to generalize this opinion on all people of the community, however it does place a pressure on many, to always strive to overcome and battle the label. Often the struggle trickles down to other issues, in health, behavior and decision making.

Obstinacy - There seem to be a double standard at play at times, where religious doctrine would be used to legitimize and validate homophobia to castigate, damage and openly discriminate large bodies of people of the non-heterosexual community, but at the same time it is nowhere to be seen in other issues that belong in the human experience such as cheating, adultery, pre-marital sexual activity, indiscriminate sexual behaviour between heterosexuals and events such as carnival/mass revelry which are more favourable to sympathetic views to be a personal or cultural issue that needs to be addressed "appropriately". Topics of intimacy, emotional attachment, desire for human love, commitment and stability are thought of as a hetero-exclusive trait.

GAYLAXY: *Is there a sense that the younger generation has a more progressive view of LGBT people?*

B.K: I do believe that the younger generation is more open-minded, understanding and susceptible to more compliant attitudes; I based my response on the older generation's largely inexorable attitude towards religion

and the wider opportunities for education provided to the current generation.

GAYLAXY: *Are there any special cultural challenges for gay Indo-Trinis?*

B.K: My belief, as I come from a diverse cultural background, makes me oblivious to race, I would admit I do experience prejudice yet I would not always be able to distinguish if these unjustifiable treatments are due to my race or my sexuality/perceived orientation. However, I am familiar of close Indo-Caribbean friends that do experience an added pressure in their struggle to understanding their sexuality caused by their strong ethnic family's expectations, conformity and fulfilment.

GAYLAXY: *Social networking seems to have been heavily embraced by the LGBT community - how important has it been and has it made the voice of LGBT*

people stronger?

B.K: I would agree that social networking has indeed played a large role in facilitating the work done by our non-profit; FreePride Foundation Project. It has not only provided us the opportunities to reach information and communicate on a more timely level, but has also granted better opportunities to building relationships & resources as well as broaden our potential for our work to reach a larger targeted audience. The social platforms used have given the underground marginalized sexual orientation community in T&T a larger voice in advocacy, communications and resourcing.

GAYLAXY: *There still seems to be a disconnect between people's online advocacy and their willingness to be*

Topics of intimacy, emotional attachment, desire for human love, commitment and stability are thought of as a hetero-exclusive trait

out in public. Do you see that changing or is there still a fear of stigma and victimization?

B.K: I would like to believe that the view is changing, when I was a very young teenager I once wanted nothing to do with "gay" activities, because I conformed to the belief that they were in some way bad people, however this view has changed significantly once I began to understand what exactly was the fear and how the associations blurred the truth. The LGBT community is large and vibrant in T&T yet in my opinion it lacks commutability to other priorities such as advocating for equal rights.

As is in many other countries, movements and initiatives, mobilization is indeed a challenging obstacle to achieve, which takes patience, creativity, ingenuity and awareness. The people in Trinidad and Tobago need to understand, learn and appreciate the value and power they have in themselves as well as understand that there are many bigoted, extremist that are working hard to strip them of their human rights, dignity and safety.

The climate we live in, I would admit, is not the most ideal or pro-gay as other places such as California, USA; but we are not as unfortunate as is in Iran, Russia or Uganda. Each must protect themselves in events where the authorities fail as they often occur, yet there are other priorities that are more important than fear. The community must work together, to not let others define ourselves, as we are advised to act in a cautious manner yet determined; because as one it's a voice but together it is roar.

GAYLAXY: *How did the idea of FreePride come about and what are its main goals?*

B.K: FreePride's original intention was to encourage mobilization via an online avenue where local members can confidentially keep up-to-mark with information, news and resources regarding the marginalized non-hetero community. It was later discovered that

Trinidad & Tobago lacked any substantial sexuality and sexual health education programmes accessible to all citizens. As the repercussion of it was now falling into light, the non-profit was further developed into an educational platform to provide the tools for one to build their knowledge on sexuality and sexual health topics. One of our fundamental goals is to provide advocates with the necessary tools to combat, distinguish & dissociate issues of misconceptions revolving around sexuality as well as actively promoting awareness for safe sexual health sustainability.

GAYLAXY: *What issues would you like to see FreePride tackle in the future?*

B.K: As is limited with our present resources, as a dynamic company I personally would like to continue our evolution as well as to continue physical outreach as we develop work that can be available to those that are limited to online accessibility.

GAYLAXY: *Given the cultural connections and the ability to communicate online do you think there are synergies to be gained from working closely with Indian LGBT groups?*

B.K: I can understand that familiarity can be an asset when it comes to collaboration, working with particular ethnicity groups can paint a broader picture on frequent issues that commonly occur in the Diaspora to which can be an incentive with closer analysis to reach a more effective approach.

GAYLAXY: *Any last words for our readers from their Indo-Trini LGBT cousins?*

B.K: I thank you for the opportunity and wish to say in my closing remarks that regardless of differences, one can make a difference if you have faith in yourself and put in the work, patience and commitment.



India

- ★ Delhi based photo-artist Sunil Gupta's exhibition on the theme of homosexuality was cancelled by Alliance Française after objection from the "moral guardians". This is second such incident in Delhi this year, where an art exhibition on the theme of homosexuality has been cancelled or attacked.
- ★ The Supreme Court finished hearing arguments on Sec 377 and has reserved its verdict on the case.

★The Indian Journal of Psychiatry, official publication of Indian Psychiatric Society, in its editorial titled 'Homosexuality and India' in its first quarter 2012 issue, Volume 54(1) have clearly stated that "the argument that homosexuality is a stable phenomenon is based on the consistency of same-sex attractions, the failure of attempts to change and the lack of success with treatments to alter orientation".

★Kolkata hosted Siddhartha Gautam Film Festival 2012 held on March 25, 2012.

G-NEWS: World G-NEWS: Media

★ Sunil Babu Pant, the only openly gay MP of Nepal as well as Asia, has written an open letter to Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder of Facebook, seeking to expand the gender identifying option beyond male and female. [Read more](#)

★A new study conducted by a team of researchers shows that homophobia is more pronounced in people who refuse to accept their same-sex desires and have grown up in an environment where such desires were strictly forbidden. [Read more](#)

★Dharun Ravi, an Indian origin student who secretly filmed his gay roommate having sex, has been found guilty of hate crime and invasion of privacy and if convicted, faces up to 10 years in jail. Tyler Clementi had committed suicide in 2010 by jumping off a bridge after his private moments were broadcast over the internet.

★Miss Universe Canada Jenna Talackova was disqualified from taking part in the Miss Universe beauty pageant for being a transgendered woman. However, after an international outcry, the organizers have allowed her to take part in the contest.



★Despite protests and international outcry, governor of St. Petersburg has signed a new law against "homosexual propaganda", which bars (and imposes fines for) gay groups, gay books and periodicals, LGBT Pride events, and other "promotion" of homosexuality. Two activists have already been detained under this law in Russia.

★Italy's highest civil court has ruled that homosexuals have the right to "a family life" and, "in specific situations," to "be treated the same as couples married by law."

GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDENT WINS KASHISH 2012 POSTER CONTEST

The winner of Kashish 2012 Poster Contest has been chosen! The KASHISH Poster designed by S Ayyappa, a young graphic design student from Vijayawada has been picked as the winner by Wendell Rodricks, one of India's top fashion designers.

Announcing the winner, Wendell Rodricks said, "The winning poster has raced ahead of the rest due to the creative nature of translating the butterfly motif without resorting to the butterfly icon that is part of the Festival motif. That apart, the message is conveyed with clarity, minimalism and dignity – three characteristics I personally cherish, and wish to congratulate the winner for the same."

The contest to design the official poster for the upcoming 3rd KASHISH Mumbai International Queer Film Festival saw a huge number of entries from professional and amateur designers as well as students across India. S Ayyappa, the young student pursuing his MSc Visual Communication (graphic design) at Andhra Loyala College, Vijayawada, was ecstatic. "I am very happy that my poster won the competition conducted by Kashish. This is the first national competition that I have participated in and

it feels great to enjoy the taste of success. This award will help me to move forward on my way to successful career in design with confidence and support. I really thank Kashish for giving me this opportunity and my friend Sampath who encouraged me to participate in the competition." Speaking of his design he said, "Like the colorful butterfly which travels around, your film festival also reaches many people"

The winner of the poster contest will receive a KASHISH trophy and a gift hamper. The winning design will also be featured on hoardings, print and online advertisements, catalogue covers, banners, cinema slides and delegate cards. Sridhar Rangayan and Pallav Patankar, Festival Directors of KASHISH 2012 echoed their sentiments. "The theme for this year's festival is 'For Everyone', which means it has something to offer for everyone – not just for the LGBT community, but also their families, colleagues and friends. The poster contest, which saw entries pouring in from across India, reflected this spirit," said Mr. Rangayan, adding, "The contest has achieved what it set out to – not just focus on the metros but also reach out to queer persons in tier 2 and tier 3 cities across India. The winner being from Vijayawada just underscores the reach



KASHISH has had in the last two years".

Mr. Patankar said, "Involving a larger community beyond the LGBT boundaries and encouraging creative expression of one's sexuality is what KASHISH has always endeavoured, I am happy that a student has understood this underlying message and has participated in this contest, keeping with this year's theme of KASHISH 2012 – For Everyone".

KASHISH 2012, the third edition of the India's first and only mainstream queer film festival, will be held between May 23-27, 2012 in Mumbai at Cinemax Versova and Alliance Française de Bombay.

MAKING OF S**T GAY DESI BOYS SAY

Kareem Khubchandani tells about his experience of making the hit Youtube video S**t Gay Desi Boys Say

Many have described the *Sh*t People Say* meme as a compilation of stereotypes that mock individual groups. My experience of watching various videos however was to view them as self-aware, documentary pieces that used comedy, exaggeration, and repetition to depict certain trends in specific communities. I had watched S**t Brown Guys Say, White Girls Say to Brown Girls,

Punjabi Mothers Say, Twinks Say, Bears Say, Black Gay Guys Say, the list goes on. I kept waiting for someone to make S**t Gay Desi Boys Say, but no one did.

In the mean time, I started building a list and the ideas poured out. You see, my Ph.D. research is on queer South Asian communities (both on the subcontinent and in the diaspora) and I tend to spend a lot of time around queer desi men. Once I

started writing, I realized I had A LOT of material - what you see in the video is only half of what the initial script looked like.

I asked Nisha and Samyuktha to help me because they both have an artistic eye: Nisha makes video blogs and Sam publishes magazines! Also, they're not gay men, so they focused on aesthetics and let me be the queer desi expert (and so there were no bitchy queen





ego clashes!). Also, they're both totally amazing and fabulous! We spent one Saturday shooting from 10:30am until 4:30pm: first by scouting out different locations in my parent's apartment, and then storyboarding the script by assigning locations and props. I had assigned the lines to four "characters" who we differentiated by facial hair, costumes, and demeanor.

We started with the guy with a full beard, he had the most lines actually and we spent a good hour and a half just getting him done. Nisha and Sam would give me notes after each shot, or make me do it again: "more bitchy!"

"less innocent!" "do the eye roll thing", "try it with glasses on". After the first character was done, I went and shaved from the beard to the goatee and we kept going.

The best scenes to shoot were the ones in bed (it was impossible to keep a straight face!), singing in the shower, and outdoors in the courtyard with random teenagers gawking at our fabulous catwalks through the garden as we sang Lady Gaga (only Poker Face made it in the video, but we had several other songs too). When we were filming at the gym, the building attendants came in to clean (one of them made it into the movie for a half-

second) and we couldn't stop giggling as they listened to our "masalariffic" lines.

Editing was an adventure – watching myself over and over was brutal, and cutting out lines that I loved sucked. There were three previous iterations of the video before it went public, the first being about 5m30s; Nisha and Sam helped me shave off non-funny content and I edited the video to shave off micro-seconds between clips. All in all, I'm quite happy with the final product and it's mostly been received well. I'm sad that some people are offended by it, but that was never the intention.



DEBATE:

Has The Indian Govt. Made A Mockery Of The Homosexuality Issue?

Organised in association with NextGen India, the online debate saw some very interesting points being put across

Even as the verdict on Sec 377 and its validity is awaited, the one aspect of this whole case that has left everyone baffled has been the response of the Govt. of India. The Govt. has changed its stance in the court so often that even the judges were left confused and angered as to which stance to accept. Until forced by the courts, GoI decided to remain "neutral" to the whole issue and only after being rebuked by the Supreme Court and instructed to file an affidavit before it did the Government accept that there is nothing wrong with the verdict of Delhi High Court and Sec 377 does infringe upon the rights of the citizens of India. Such flip flops on the government's part and hesitation to come up in support of the citizens of its own country left us wondering, 'Has the Indian government made a mockery of the homosexuality issue?' And this

was exactly what we set out to debate online on 31st March.

Held in association with NextGen India, the debate saw active participation by many. Gay rights activist Harrish Iyer, who was a panelist, put forth his view on the topic and said, "I think that the Govt. hasn't made a mockery of homosexuality. It has made a mockery of itself." He went on to say that the government has been playing "yo-yo with homosexuals" and wondered why it was so uncomfortable to tell the world that two adults would be allowed to have consensual sex in their bedrooms? Editor-in-chief Sukhdeep Singh countered this by pointing that the government has finally supported the decriminalization, "The government has just been shy, but has pretty much stood for gays now by favouring Delhi HC verdict." Harish was at his witty best and said that he was

only too glad that the government has lifted its ghoongat finally. Maria Bea Tonini (@beatrice108) wondered whether the case would have moved faster with the government support from the beginning, to which Sukhdeep replied that it would have made conditions more favourable, but things wouldn't have moved faster as courts have their own procedures. To a question by Maria as to what could be the reason behind the ambiguous stand of the government on the issue, Harish noted that the fact that everything in this country takes a religious turn may be one of the reasons behind the unclear stand of the government, while Sukhdeep pointed out that it could be the fear of a political backlash in a country still shy of talking about sex. When asked by the moderator Dhruva Mathur whether cultural considerations might have

played a part in the government's hesitation at accepting the Delhi High Court verdict, Harrish was quick to say, "I wish it was really influenced by culture because India has a culture of homosexuality in our age old scriptures." Dhruva wondered when the government has a majority in the Parliament, then why has it shied away from amending Sec 377 and whether the elected representatives of the country are purposely denying a section of Indian population their rights? Sukhdeep argued that being a coalition government, the support of allies to make any changes to

Sec 377 is also crucial, and the allies need not be on the same platform as the government, and adjournments and walk outs by the opposition on any controversial issue has become a routine. "Among those elected representatives also comes the opposition and not just the government," he concluded. "No one is so out to support gays. [@MeeraSanyal](#) did, as an independent candidate," Harrish added.

Harish next highlighted the difficulties faced by transgenders in the society. "I feel homosexuality also comes later. What rights do

transgenders have in our country? arnt they human?" he wondered. Maria Bea Tonini pointed out that the issue is broader here and not just restricted to homosexuality, and all sexualities need to be protected. "We are just not fighting for the rights of gays, but for LGBTs, which includes all," Sukhdeep added.

With the one hour coming to an end, Dhruva concluded the debate with the note that elected representatives belonging to political parties don't support homosexuality and rights for homosexuals must also lead to rights for transgenders.

@hiyer: We are a nation that doesn't speak of sex. We only do a lot of it.

@Dhruva_Mathur: Can it be said that the elected representatives are purposely denying a section of the Indian population their rights?

@Beatrice108: Perhaps the issue is broader. All sexualities should be protected.

@hiyer: No one is so out to support gays. @MeeraSanyal did, as an independent candidate.



After online magazines, it is time for online podcasts. RJ Raw writes about Jub We Talk, India's first LGBT podcast

A college going 19 year old geek decides to do something in his time off for the people of a community, called LGBT, to which he belongs himself. Calls up a few friends, with affirmatives, negatives and non-believing critics' reviews, the online podcast called Jub We Talk comes to life.

JWT, as abbreviated, started as the sole endeavour of RJ Savvy, with his friends of the same community, for the sheer purpose of connectivity and entertainment along with a slice of activism impregnated into it. Since August of last year, one monthly episode is released online on the website www.jubwetalk.in which includes love-struck couples

and "diljalay ashqi", friends and not-so-friends all dedicating songs to each other like any other radio show you come across. To infuse more entertainment, KJ, a Delhi-based music student does the oh-so-famous "Bakra", featuring people getting into really embarrassing telephonic conversations revealing their dirty little secrets.

The podcast also features Soul Talk with Rohan, in which Rohan, who runs his personal podcast, does a guest appearance, helping people with soul curry-like sessions, discussing and comforting various situations encountered by queers in daily life. It also has a regular appearance by Anuj Arya, another Delhi-

based freelancer, who airs not once but on two slots, The Love bites, where one can find crispy little intimate mushy moments and on the other hand grave critical soul-touching sessions pertaining to love and allied areas. Another of his slot, Love Guru (sometimes in tandem with Rohan), gives everyone a lesson about how to deal with normal queer situations which we never really think about, but crib for sure. Dealing with the romantic side of what can be and must be done in order to get to our goals in the love orb.

The most interesting of all topics in JWT are Famous Personality, in which conversations with LGBT

activists and like fames are showcased to enlighten listeners with the timeline and experiences of queer world including our very own Sukhdeep and Harrish Iyer; and Topic of the Month, in which various grave issues pertaining to lifestyle are primarily focused and reviewed from people living and experiencing them to help fellow LGBTs.

The most recent addition to JWT is the Raw Side, which will be released in alternation. Hosted by RJ Raw, this side of JWT deals with the momentous and vital issues which are

rarely discussed and are sometimes considered taboo. Apart from dealing with contemporary gay in straight situations, this part of podcast deals with bringing gay world to reality openly and maintaining the integrity of it as such. It also deals with the kinky aspect of gay life, sex, and hook ups, STDs and airs expert medical advice. Another considerable slot is Jub Stars Talk, an astrology section dedicated solely to gay predictions about love, life and money.

India's first online LGBT podcast, as it is called, JWT is

growing at a commendable rate, and with increased listeners and yet to come sections dealing with deeper gayer insights and suggestions about the lifestyle of LGBT youth in India, is now also planning to expand into gay-friendly straight community and dynamic horizons of activism.

You Can Now Subscribe to Jub We Talk's Sms alerts and updates by following the link - <http://labs.google.co.in/smschannels/subscribe/Jubwetalk> Facebook Page is : <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Jub-We-Talk/>



COLOURS O

Winning entries, judged by Balbir Krishan



- Sonali Roy

F F FREEDOM



-Shiv Sahoo



-Rajib Mukherjee

COLOURS O



Entry: Priyank Sukanand



Entry: Sharath Iyengar



Entry: Sharath Iyengar

F FREEDOM



Entry: Shiv Sahoo




Entry: Shiv Sahoo



by Doel Mitra



3rd Mumbai International Queer Film Festival

A large, stylized illustration of a butterfly is positioned on the left side of the poster. The wings are filled with various colors including purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, and pink, with black outlines and red spots along the edges. The background is a solid red color with a subtle pattern of small white stars.

India's Biggest International Queer Film Festival

for everyone

*May 23-27, 2012
Cinemax Versova*

*May 24-26, 2012
Alliance Française
de Bombay*

*More details at
www.mumbaiqueerfest.com*

BETWEEN THE GAP

As long as a relation makes you happy, go for it without caring to limit yourself to the labels of gay, straight or bisexual; writes **Karan Sood**

"I have been straight all my life until you came to me as my lover," he said. What would you call it? A lie, a tacky trick, or ignorance? To me it's a mystery. Sexuality had been a mystery to me, and still is. We have no scale to measure few things, and sexuality lands up in the same list.

Few years back, when I made my (fake) profile on Orkut, and I mentioned my sexuality as bisexual, a friend of mine told me to change it to gay. I didn't reason with him, rather changed it, and gradually found the reason. May be it was my immaturity, people actually did not prefer befriending bisexuals, inevitably making it morally down. Being gay was fine, being straight obviously fine, but bisexuality was in close proximity to something wrong.

To this, as many people would, I too disagreed.

Few days back, I was at work when one of my friends, who had been in a heterosexual relationship for past three years and had broken up just a few months back, called me and told that he has a boyfriend now. To me, to be true, first it seemed to be a

joke, something indigestible. And, then I realized things aren't vulgar anyway, but the sharp boundaries are.

I have found straight guys falling for gays, gays falling for girls; no trick involved, no lust dominated, no love deceived, and that too when they had a great heterosexual/homosexual relationship (respectively) in their past. Some may say it's out of boredom, or it's out of frustration, but the mystery remains.

Sex is one thing, an important component of life but certainly smaller than love and attachment. Once one is involved with a person emotionally to the extreme,

"getting physical" with him doesn't make him gay or bisexual, when he knows it won't happen with anyone else ever in his life. The complications to relationship persist (in which relation it doesn't?), but in that case you need to broaden your concept of sexuality and individuality, rather than convincing him to turn gay/bisexual or accept him as gay/bisexual. Love is always above definitions.

The mystery will remain within your maturity levels, the vulgarity will remain within the beauty of life, and the choice too will always remain all yours. And, all I will say is, "As long as it makes you happy go ahead."



PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS



This is not a gay related post. Though I will talk about the gay community in general but any person should relate to it. I am talking about happiness and joy in general. People are always in pursuit of happiness all the time, for it is only normal. Of course, happiness does not always include the pleasure and satisfaction of self needs. Happiness can be pursued by helping other people or doing something for others. It all depends on the situation involved. Yes, happiness is tricky and we hear people complaining and moaning all the time about it. They always claim that they never find happiness and of course we always hear new

lectures about the pursuit of happiness and how to vanquish sadness and misery from our lives. I could go on and write a book about the human mind and how it seeks self satisfaction and how it works.

But I am going to limit myself to the members of the community in particular. Most people I see have this tendency to feel low all the time. And yes, while it is true that many people have problems in their lives regarding the coping of pressure and working out solutions of personal problems, most people tend to magnify their problems. They feel self pity and always find someone else to blame for it.

The thing is everyone has solutions to their problems. The answer lies in being lucky and working on finding it. Yes, life does play many tricks on you and more often than not life truly is unfair. However, no matter what the consequences and no matter what the pain... standing up to your problems and saying "No I shall not fall" does indeed work wonders.

Yes, being gay is certainly not easy at all. You will face a million problems out there and a zillion more obstacles will be laid in front of you. But keeping your head cool and working slowly but steadily will make life seem better.

This post was published in www.desiboyz.in - The social network for gay Indian men worldwide

COMING OUT OF THE CLOSET

-Sambhav K Sharma

It was the eve of Delhi Queer Pride parade, 2010. My home seemed like a madhouse. I live in a joint family and that night, we were double the number with my cousins, aunts and uncles who I had invited for a family dinner. I had intimated everyone well in advance and had plans to talk to them about gender and sexuality, and how these come to be experienced in a Punjabi middle class family. Most of the male relatives took a lot of time to come to terms with my sexuality. But it was worth all the effort. It has been four years since I came out to my mom. I was 17 then. The time since then has seen a series of battles with ignorance and hatred; and now, I can finally see glimmers of realization and love.

Back in 2007, when I came out to my mom, I knew that I had to exit the narrow and dark roads, and open myself to a massive exploration of my life. But having seen my heroes fight for their rights at the forefront over the years, I became determined. All those activists, writers, filmmakers, lawyers and many other everyday heroes, gave and continue to give strength and messages of hope to middle class guys like me who often come from very conservative households. I live in Kashmeri Gate, in old Delhi, among about 20-25 other joint families that have

managed to survive over the years. People tend to get deceived by the appearance of the place and think it's a slum, when it in fact one of the more economically developed places in old Delhi. Another advantage is its

proximity to the metro service, which takes me back to 29th November, 2010, the day of the Pride. My brother was away on a road trip with his girlfriend so we didn't have our car. My mother suggested we take the metro. I looked at



the painted banners and placards we were carrying for the parade, and then looked at her in open-mouthed disbelief. "So what?" she said. "They are going to stare right? Let them. For years I have seen people struggling to change our society for the better and, like you told me, this is no small cause." Left astonished, I simply nodded and said, "Yes Mom, you're absolutely right."

It was a little difficult for my grandmother as she is really old, but on the eve of the parade, I remember listening to her talk to the rest of the family about the relevance of participating in the Pride parade. I can't describe the joy I felt, at witnessing such a revolutionary and drastic change that night in my own family. It makes me think about how far we have come in these four years. Earlier, on

hearing homophobic comments, I would argue for myself, but now, my family steps ahead. It is they who support me and defend my right to live the way I want to; they understand my sexuality and slowly and steadily, they are coming to terms with it. A lot was decided that night itself—who were the courageous ones, or shall I say the activist kind in my family, who would come forward and participate at the Pride event the next day. Upon which, my grandmother was disappointed to see that it was only my mom and my cousins and herself. My brother wanted to come but he couldn't because he wanted to celebrate his girlfriend's birthday in the hills. So, I was okay with

that. Besides, I still remember that moment in 2009, when the Delhi High court had passed the landmark judgment; we had assembled at Jantar Mantar to celebrate and my brother came there and supported me.

My grandmother is an old but energetic and fierce woman. She has taught me a great deal about life. She is one of my inspirational feminist icons. At the parade, she walked all the way from Tolstoy Marg in CP to Jantar Mantar and I was so amazed to see how she single-handedly, and with great confidence, handled the reporters; she had a determined answer for every question that was thrown at her by the media persons.

'I am proud to say my grandson is gay.' That's what my grandmother's placard read. Alongside her, my mom and my cousins also held posters and banners in their hands. I felt overwhelmed; this was my fairy tale. Seeing us, the Pride organizers asked my grandmother to come to the stage and share a few words with everyone. There was so much excitement in the crowd; we were more than 3500 in number.

Everybody welcomed her on stage with the loudest applause anyone could've ever heard at Jantar Mantar. She spoke about the need for our society to explore and open our minds to the world that exists beyond the narrow confines of hetero-normative structures that we have framed our minds with. She often stressed on the word "*Avaam ki azaadi*", "*Bacho ko*





jeene ki azaadi" and she spoke like a radical feminist, which is frankly more than I could have dreamed for my family to become when I had started coming out to them four years ago. Every word and action expressed by my family that day filled me with a deep sense of satisfaction. I faced my own conscience with a brave voice; I am 21 and suddenly growing up also meant becoming important,

almost a hero in the drama of one's life. Thanks to last year's Pride, I am convinced that the Pride parade is not just for people with alternative sexuality. It is a celebration for everyone. When I asked my mom and grandmother about their experience, they said boldly that it was the first time in their lives that they felt proud of being women; not as women who were

marginalized in society, but as those who understand that the shallow hetero-normative norms couldn't do good for anyone, especially for their kids who identify themselves as LGBTQI.

On that account, I believe that every household must come forward and march with their kids at the Pride parade so that they can give hope to others. Just like my family did last year. I too, tell everybody how I went through the same experience as many, who have to deal with the initial sense of denial by their families, the disappointments and all the sadness that accompanies the struggle to convince them about one's natural way of expressing sexuality.

I want to live in a society that thinks beyond patriarchy and hetero-normativity; where parents support their kids about the freedom to express their sexuality. For years, we have been hindered by our own laws, myths and stereotypes. It is high time for everybody to end the discrimination and violence, and reclaim our freedom to live and think as we want. It has been interesting to see how the struggles and campaigning around gender and sexuality that have emerged in this last decade in our country, are not just about queer people. They have included everybody because it is a bigger question of freedom—the right to Liberty as has been guaranteed in our Constitution.

Pictures courtesy: Sambhav Sharma

BEER AND GAY SEX

What is it about alcohol that makes people more open to experimenting with alternate sexuality, wonders **Rohan Noronha**

Don't believe me because I am still trying to figure out the truth in this. Well I have a lot of hunky straight hot men as friends, and yes they love their beers too. But never has it been that they hit on me when drunk, now who the hell would get drunk on beer!!

But I have also noticed at pubs and bars, straight men when they binge, they kind of get physical and touchy with one another. And when you find a group of straight men, drunk and on the floor, shaking their gorgeous behinds to the pulsating beats of *chikni chameli* and *munni badnaam hui*, it makes you stop and wonder, could there be an iota of "gayness" in them?

When in college and drinking with buddies, I wasn't out to most about my sexuality. I remember this one incident when a new "straight" guy was introduced to our circle. That evening we had a get together at a friends place and it went on till wee hours of the night. It was around 2 a.m. when all were asleep and just the two of us still drinking that he made advances. Well he was certainly my type to have a one night stand with, but I didn't want to take my chances.

I shrugged it off and never spoke about it ever to him, he did the same. While camping with strangers in Himachal on a field trip

conducted by one of my work places, I felt the same advances again from a Gujjar fella!! Now call it horniness or maybe a bootcamp of men which drove him to go commando seeing me in my bare essentials, I wonder if alcohol had anything to do with it, because he walked into my room drunk and naked.

Many gay men I know say the same experiences have happened with them, especially with "Straight" guys around. This incites curiosity in me, are these guys really "straight" or "is it the alcohol"? I would really like to speak to a psychologist, a social psychologist that has done enough of research on gay and straight men, I need answers to this.

One of my gay best friends told me, he was spending the night at a straight friend's place, when they got drinking. Through

their conversations they started talking about sex, women, gays, lesbians and everything around, including porn. Needless to say, the energy between the two of them and gallons of Bacchus drowning them, they ended up having sex with one another, full fledged and hardcore. I heard they still do, sans the alcohol at times, so was it the sex talk, the alcohol or just a gay man having sex with a bisexual, bi-curious or a closeted gay friend?

I wouldn't know the answers to all of these at once, since I am no expert. Hence I decided to bring this topic forward to our readers, because I sincerely believe that at least some of us have dealt with such issues, and maybe willing to share our insights! What do you say? Would you like to tell us anonymously if need be about four beers turning him gay?



LET THE CARDS SPEAK

- Rohan Noronha

It is once again the season of Lent and Ostara as well, popularly known as Easter. St Patricks day went by and we had a great time, now we look forward to what the summers bring along to us. So without further ado I send you all my wishes for Easter and let's see what your cards have to say!!

So let the cards speak!!

Aries Mar 21 - Apr 19



You actually would think why this card came to you, and normally would blame yourself for all the mistakes. But this card is quite contrary to its name when picked, it means you have the grit and determination to set things right. You would see plenty of action happening at work, keep your senses alert. Do not fall for sweet talks in a relationship, it could lead you to unending trouble. Be wise and play the cards well, there isn't anything you have to be scared of then.

Taurus Apr 20 - May 20



They say those who know the art of seducing the mind and the body, prosper well. And this is exactly what the magician asks of you this season. Your charm, wit and grace would take you place, and give you encounters you thought were never going to be possible for you. At work there could be hurdles, but knowing your charisma, nothing can get in your way. Try and understand your parent's feelings in this hectic world, they need your time too.

Gemini May 21 - June 20



Trying times ahead, especially for those who have a change in location because of work or other needs. The high priestess will be there to guide you and keep you safe, but you need to listen to your instincts. Moms health may take a beating once again, but don't worry, she will come out of it sooner than you can think. At work there are new developments, you maybe asked to shift base to another location or could change your job. Whatever you do, think ten times and then take a leap!

Cancer June 21 - July 22



Don't be overconfident about any venture you decide to put your fingers in. Take your time and read the fine print before you make commitments. The plan now should be of thoughts, how you could best channelize them in your favour. Things should go smooth at work, unless of course you become too impulsive. Take care of your health, your stomach and waist could be troubling you in weeks ahead.

Leo July 23 - Aug 22



This is a perfect card picked for you, as Leos are always born leaders. Never mind what people at home or work have to say about you, follow your gut instincts and all will be fine. If you have been suffering from sore throats, tonsillitis, or fever, it's time you listen to your body and care for its needs. At work you will be popular with results and solutions will be coming out of your head like never before. Have fun while it lasts, the summers can be killing otherwise.

Virgo Aug 23 - Sept 22



Stop spinning yarns to gain popularity, not a wise thing to do. People have been listening to your stories for quite some time, but now the wheel could turn and this happens especially during summers. Be very careful about your way of conduct at work, the seniors are watching and the juniors aren't too impressed. It's high time you took a break from your daily mundane life and did something interesting, maybe that could keep you out of troubles way for the weeks ahead.

Libra Sept 23 - Oct 22

If it's getting hot out there, it's hotter where you are! Yes Librans, summer surprisingly brings the sexy romantic man out of you. It is time you go partying, having fun and dancing away till wee hours of the morning. You have never had it so good like how you have it now, and this time with Easter round the corner, there are many more reasons to take your lover out, make a proposal or have a hot steamy moment, ahem!!

Capricorn Dec 22 - Jan 19

Brooding over the past brings you nothing, because that is a road best left deep and forgotten. You wouldn't have to visit the past anymore my dear friend, not until you want to bring back lost painful memories. You have to learn to move ahead and be like the hermit, even if you think about the past, analyse what you learnt from the past. This would be a good way to forgive and completely forget as well, what say?

Scorpio Oct 23 - Nov 21

Born to be free and born to be wild, that's what the scorpion of today would be like. Mind over matter in various aspects, you have what it takes to get you all that you deserve. Stop listening to what others have to say about you, they don't pay your bills, clothe you or feed you. Your inner voice is rambling with thrills and chills, learn to listen to it and play the cards accordingly. Don't overdo anything for anyone, not worth it, especially at work.

Aquarius Jan 20 - Feb 18

Now that you have seen the world through their eyes and realised your mistakes, quickly make amendments and become a new person. Learn from what went wrong and this summer would make it all right for you. Please spend more time with family, emotionally being there is as important as physically being around as well. Your friends too need your time, and so does your lover. Stop cribbing and whining about things not going right, they won't until you don't stop!!

Sagittarius Nov 22 - Dec 21

I see 6 you see 9, and that's how the Sagittarius mind is. Try and look at the world from their perspective as well, remember not everything is about you. You have to be considerate about other people's feelings and opinions; your sharp tongue could cut you and no one else if it is not kept in control. At home there are many emotional changes on the burner happening, learn to deal with it.

Pisces Feb 19 - March 20

I give you seven stars of love, blessings, admiration, prosperity, humour, fun, happiness, and everything nice, with sugar and spice. This card is a lucky card for you, so if you have been planning to make changes and do something different with your love life, career etc, now is the time to do so. Go right ahead, for the summer months won't scorch you dry, in fact you would be blessed to have a lot of friends helping you reach the pinnacle of success.

THE DREAMER

- Gaurav Deka

His clothes resembled that of a hermit. There were seduction screens everywhere written "Biplov Biplov Biplov". He seemed to be a mere seventeen. How could I? His face glistened with all the light in the open space and his teeth, as if in total harmony with his tongue, sticking out—pearly white. "How could he smile to see my anxious face?" Lips were a perfect mix of vermillion and Gold-nano-particles. Oh! That bullshit my Chemistry Boyfriend of three years always talks about. But I knew it was a dream. I needed to get out. But I couldn't. I had to kiss him. Swallow his spit. Lock the tip of my tongue against his vestibule, the narrow piece of tender muscle connecting the lip and the upper jaw. Oh! He loved it, I knew! But now it was time for me to leave...

"Biplov...Wake up Biplov. See I have got

Elaichi tea for you."

"Oh Viren! Thanks a lot," I realised I was already awake before my dream got over.

Viren, my boyfriend, is usually a workaholic. We had met at the 2008 New Year party at OXYGEN, a discotheque at Brigade Road. He was sitting quietly with his drink and I was eyeing him from far away sitting with a bunch of other gay mates that I had made friends with at Matteo's at MG Road. My clinic was located just nearby the cafe where all foreigners gathered like flocks of white pigeon from morning to evening. I and my mates used to go there for cruising hot looking Europeans and have a fag or two.

It was 30th of December that we made our individual New Year resolutions; mine (though



secret) was to get settled in a relationship. So we decided to party at OXYGEN on 31st. Now here this gentleman was lost in the oblivion with his half filled glass. Rishi, one of my mates noticed me eyeing him and asked me to go forward. "Shame" is a word that doesn't appear in my dictionary but today the array of events was different. I was hesitant and reluctant. Somehow after being pushed by all of them I gathered the courage to go and sit in the couch just opposite him with my trademark Absolute Cigarette between my fingers. With all my pseudo-confidence I looked straight into his eyes. The moment lingered for a while until both of us came to know the meaning of love at first sight. We knew love had chosen to ignite itself within both of us, amidst that ambience of loud music, as if everything seemed quiet and I imagined Yanni playing the piano by my side *"In your eyes"*.

We gave each other time and explored each other until we came to the conclusion of living together in his apartment at Yelahanka. Wishes and aspirations kept fulfilling and no complaints from any of us arose until I realised that things have changed since then.

He doesn't spend much time arranging the linen or the bedcovers. He is glued to his PC until there's a call from the kitchen to which like an obedient kitten he would walk bare feet making no noise and sit quietly on the dining table for the food to be served.

On the other hand I am as erratic as any Aquarian. Mornings are always organised for him—Shirts, Ties, Socks, Handkerchiefs, whereas I would still lay flustered with the seventeen year old and wrapped inside his seduction screens.

Viren's parents had shifted to Guwahati because they couldn't adjust with us. So here we were left alone in Bangalore. However there was Manjunath, our gay servant, who

would give me all the gossip of the town. How an old man in his locality was caught by the police for acts of bestiality with a cow, about his sex-periences with a vegetable vendor at Anand Rao Circle and Queens dressed in pink, yellow and blue roaming around the Forum Mall the other day at Koramangala. Between all these he would wash everything from table corners to steel plates and pour water down the filter and occasionally ask about my health, questioning about the epitril tablets that I took early morning to avoid my panic attacks.

I was having this, if not perfect, but a normal life with my wouldn't-care-less boyfriend and my books—my treasure...until.

**I was having
this, if not perfect,
but a normal life
with my wouldn't-
care-less
boyfriend and my
books—my
treasure**

My thighs were tingling. There were moonlight particles being scattered all over. Powder, Powder everywhere....I could feel my fleshy member wet with the smell of some musky odour. I could feel something lingering inside my lower orifice. Is it a snake? I bend my head backward and saw a husk of blue grey hair, a head stuffed inside me, my naked body...

"Biplov, you are dozing off again. How many times I have told you to keep my watch at place. Why do you always feel sleepy?"

"It's because of that epitril, I guess!"

"Then stop taking those goddamn tablets."

Viren generally doesn't shout at me but of late he has become very unsteady and frustrating in his character. I am quite not liking it, but then again it's my fault also. I was actually desperate to see the seventeen year old's face being thrust into my interiors. Am I infidel? I ask sometimes to myself. But Manjunath and his clanging plates and his endless gossip never let me come to a concrete decision. Now when one would ask, "Can't you

think at night?"

"Sorry I really can't!"

Viren sleeps with his back facing to me now (no issues at all), and I am like, too ready to meet my seventeen year old lover.

He kisses me with deep passion and his eyes, exactly like Viren shines with all its might. His neck muscles relaxes and tightens as he makes the pout for me, seducing me to come near. And as I put my hands down his collar with the unbuttoned shirt, I can feel radiance of hair around his nipples that grow stiff when I try to pinch them in ecstasy.

We never converse. We always make Love.

Today I found him a bit older, quite familiar; I thought of it for some time and then the morning bell of the milkman shattered everything. Mincing my fingers as I kept the bowl on the yellow shelf near the filter, I tried to contemplate more on his familiarity (while Viren lay awake with his laptop on the plastic table just beside our bed checking some Chemistry papers), but couldn't figure it out at all.

It was Tuesday night. Viren returned home early. I was busy reading Ayn Rand as Manjunath answered the call. He took a chance to leave the house at that moment itself, perhaps go cruising again at Anand Rao circle.

"Let's go to Heinekhen."



"Well. What's that?"

"Well Heinekhen is the name of an old German beer, but it's a bar cum resto at Indra Nagar"

I thought for some time. I thought whether drunkenness will affect my dream? Will I meet the person again after I am drunk? Would the sleep be too deep that I wouldn't even meet him?

And then contemplation transformed into physical stiletto steps and after an hour Viren and I were sitting at a corner table where an Assamese waiter came to take the orders.

We ordered "*Chicken stewed with peanut sauce and olive chicken, three large pegs of vodka for each and lots of ice*". We reached home at around 12:45am. I was going hasty and nervous, at not being able to sleep at the stipulated daily time. Viren was looking at me shocked, as I was trying to pull my blankets even without changing my clothes, that too even without taking off my pointed pink shoes.

"What the hell is wrong with you?"

"I am drunk!" that's the only answer I gave and went off to sleep.

He took a piece of ice and put it on my navel. It trembled and made swiping moves like Manjunath does with his broomstick while cleaning the bedroom.

"Why don't you leave him?" he spoke for the first time.

There are perhaps no shocks in dreams, and so I non-chalantly answered,

"I cannot, he is my boyfriend."

"What am I then?" he came closer to my chest, heaving up and down, naked with two pin sized suns erecting gradually in impatience.

I wept...

"Biplov, what happened Biplov? Why are you crying? You need something? Is it a nightmare?" Viren hadn't slept till now. He was still uploading pics of Heinekhen on Facebook.

I nodded gently as tears streamed down my brown skin.

Viren brought me a glass of cold water which I had in one go. He then took me on his lap. The other knee sat his lappy and he stroked my hair gently. He curled his fingers between my silken black and tried putting me to sleep.

I woke up afresh in the morning.

I tried to remember the dream again. He looked a bit more mature. Maybe 24 years or so. His teeth seemed exactly like Viren, but not his voice. Somewhere I was searching for the lost love of Viren. Both of us had had a secret ring ceremony in Kamakhya on our trip to Guwahati. We were completely in love but, the chemistry was missing. There were less of sexual interest and at times I had to seduce him to bed with Firangipani and Joba flowers which he treated as an aphrodisiac. This was the state of affairs and I was really getting tired because my orgasms weren't reaching their peaks. I was searching for the lost chemistry. I tried tantra and tantric sexual texts too, but to all my hard work there were not even a single result. It was not that he was involved with a different man. Oh! I cannot imagine in my wildest dreams—that work crazy boyfriend of mine but somehow things weren't working according to the order.

There were moonlight powder again. He had thrust his head into my clean shaven chest. He whispered something which sounded muffled, but the voice seemed exactly of Viren. He started licking my balls with spit sticking like fevicol to it. I didn't know where his balls were. But then he was giving of a typical Viren-ish smell. He then came over my face and I could see his nose flaring up like Viren does when he is about to sneeze. The sneeze ended and so did the dream.

Next day Viren was shaving off his 2 month old beard. I was nagging behind it as I do not like facial hair at all. He was smiling,

with the background music of George Michael playing and shaving off the entire surface area. I was happy to see him. He got late for office while shaving. I wanted to kiss him and was about to pout my lips and bend forward towards him, just when he got up from the bed and took his suitcase away and left closing the door on the left.

"Why don't you kiss me instead of kissing him?"

I tried to look at his face but all I could see was white light.

I struggled a lot. In the process I found his lips entering my vestibule. Smacking all the way, spit splashed here and there. Teeth clenched and tongues rolling in unknown directions—inexperienced waves. Just then I saw his eyes. As soon as I did I pushed him off.

What I saw made me shudder with fear.

It was Viren.

"Yes I am him and I really love you!" he smiled in as if in delight.

That evening when Viren came from office, the first thing I did was to take away his watch. I had applied a little blusher to make my brown skin glow. I made his favourite pasta and after being eaten, I lighted a candle on the table. Flickering the flame with my index fingers I asked him

"Do you love me Viren?"

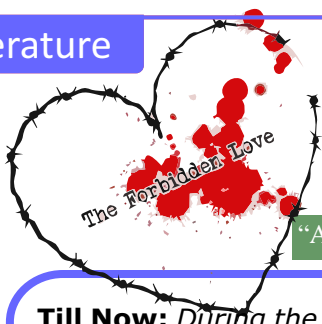
Viren kept quiet for a moment, and smiling with his teeth in perfect harmony with his tongue sticking out.

"Tell me Viren do...?"

Before I could complete, he said, "Yes Biplov, I really do."

I said nothing after that. I just held his hand and took him near the bed. I removed the pillows, the bedcovers and, laid down the seduction sheets.

THE END



Forbidden Love in a coal mine

"A tale of love and lust between an upper class brahmin & an uneducated rural boy" by Victor

Till Now: *During the visit to his village, Bagha spent some passionate moments with a female lover, whom he has to marry now.*

As we crossed a lean Damodar on boat with my CD-100 lugged on its side, I thought about the times Bagha and I spent in my C-20 quarter and underground. Memories came flashing, of the kisses I stole from him behind machines and unused tubs inside the mine, the squeezes I gave him underground when we met at the end of shifts to surface together, of how he proudly showed his stuff in the new underwear I gifted him for the first time. Even in my despair, I was having a hard on.

We reached his village before breakfast time and his widowed mother was pleasantly surprised and at the same time scared. Scared because she knew that Baanshi's father, a well known *Chhau* dancer of the village was looking for him to marry his daughter to Bagha.

I was requested to sit in the front yard of the beautifully painted mud hut on a *charpoi* while Bagha and his mother went out somewhere (later I learnt he went to Baanshi's house to meet her father and place his request for the inevitable). I lazed in the morning sun and looked around. There was a cattle-shed behind the house with two emaciated cows and a baby goat tied to bamboo posts. I got hold of the timid kid and was slowly caressing his neck and ears, loving the soft and silky touch of his black coat and the warm pulsating heart in my hands, never having done so earlier, when Bagha came from behind and announced breakfast.

After a heavy breakfast of *chewra* (rice flakes) mixed with *sajnedaanta*, a local drumstick *sabzi* (the mixture another exotic first), I went out with Bagha to have a look around the

village. The narrow dusty village road was lined with small mud cottages, mostly single storeyed, but clean and with a border or a design in white and red painted on each hut's exterior. Every time we braked, we were engulfed in red dust churned up by my wheels. Riding pillion, bending forward to reach his breath on my ears Bagha asked me if I wanted to meet Baanshi, his betrothed. Bagha had met her father and when told about the facts and the future, his anger subsided, and the conflict got resolved.

Had I been a girl, I'd have been instantly ready. I'd have liked to see the person who was better than me in weaning away my lover, to see for myself the factors that caused him to think of leaving me for her. Being a man, a hurt, crestfallen but still proud and practical man, I declined. He was surprised and, I guessed, a little hurt. I didn't explain, he didn't insist. We were both playing with each other, knowing fully well that there was no tomorrow in our relationship...we were near the end of our road together.

I rode on, he guided me from the back. I was

thinking of a lonely home after his departure, he kept on chattering, describing every conceivable rural mystic in detail. I felt sad and my heart ached, but couldn't express myself. I couldn't shout, couldn't let myself out... I had a burden on my heart. He was in his element. His own rural surroundings had brought out the usual chirpy rustic in him. Even if I had poured out my grief, he was in no position to appreciate my feelings at that time. He was too engrossed in his own world, quite naturally.

*Ami hridoyer kotha bolite byakul,
(I yearn to pour out my heart)
Shunite na chahe keho
(none is ready to listen)..... Tagore*

I wanted the ride to continue knowing fully well



literally and figuratively it had to end soon.

Ei path jodi na sesh hoi
(If this road never ends)
Tobe kemon hoto tumi bolo to,
(Then tell me how it would be)
Jodi prithibita swapner desh hoi,
(if the world was a state of dreams)
Tobe kemon hoto tumi bolo to.
(Then tell me how it would be)

During winters, in Bengal, especially in the dry districts of Purulia, Bankura, Birbhum and West Midnapur, the date palm trees (*khajur*) were given on contract for sapping of the juice from their upper trunks. A tree was marked and had an earthen pot hanging from the place just below from where a V shaped deep cut was made on the uppermost area of the trunk of the palm trees. The sap dripped slowly but continuously into the pot and after a fixed time this juice was collected. All the juices from a group of trees under a contractor were brought at one place and mixed in huge trays or cauldrons. On boiling and stirring repeatedly for a long time on huge earthen stoves formed by digging into the soil, this was converted to a sticky and gooey liquid jaggery which is known as Notun Gur or more famously "*Nolen Gur*". A dash of this condiment changed the flavour and taste of any milk/*chhena* based sweet. *Nolen Gur*, *Sandesh*, or *Rasogolla* or *Payes* (kheer) were a few things that formed an added attraction for Bengal to visitors and outsiders during winter. Thanks to Bagha I got to know the whole process and on my way tasted both the raw juice (its elixir) fresh from the hanging pot and also saw the process of mixing and boiling. I got presented with ½ Kg of solid *Patali Gur* as a gift from his village gur-maker.

I also met his other 2 brothers who worked in

the fields of landholders for a living and at the same time studied in the village high school. They both had bodies to die for, but none with the oomph of my Bagha. They were all talking amongst themselves in an alien Dravidian sounding language, which I knew was called *Kurukh*.

Bagha and I sat down on the earthen floor inside with his brothers and had an Oraon lunch of boiled rice, very thin and bland *daal*, a

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 with each other,
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mixed sabzi of *kachu* (rhizome/corm) and *fulgobi* (cauliflower) and the dessert was in the form of hot liquid molten jaggery. *Makar Sankranti* was near and it was a big festival in the villages of my state. So Bagha's mother had stocked up on *Nolen Gur* for some '*pithe*' for the mid January *parab*. We had a cupful each.

We left soon after. The sun had already crossed west. We drove slowly and without much conversation between us. When we opened the fencing gate of my home, it was past 5 and approaching dusk.



Routinely, Bagha made coffee for me and came to my bedroom with the smoking cup. He had his tea in another. Though I didn't ask him to, he sat beside me on my bed, and stayed silent. There was a poignant silence hanging in the room. As if the whole world was waiting with baited breath to hear how we would cope with the ensuing separation. We finished sipping our respective beverages. I kept thinking about the day past, the days gone by and the good times I had with him. A gecko was heard clucking somewhere in the house. My trance was broken and I lightly placed one arm on his shoulder, just like yore.

I opened my mouth to say that I'd be missing him...he placed his hand on my mouth, stopping me in mid-sentence. ■

To be continued...



LIVE TO
SEE YOUR LOVE
KILL GAY BULLYING NOT YOURSELF

SUPPORT GROUPS FOR LGBT

WEST BENGAL

THE PRATYAY GENDER TRUST

Contact person : Anindya Hajra
Address : 293 Jodhpur Park ,
 Calcutta, Pin 700 068
Phone : 033 2464 1893

E-mail :
pratyaygendertrust@yahoo.co.in

Target populations : Hijras,
 MSM (particularly kotis)

DURBAR MAHILA SAMANWAYA COMMITTEE

Contact person : Mrinal Kanti Dutta
Address : 12/5 Nilmoni Mitra Street, Kolkata West Bengal, India
Phone : 033 2543 7451 / 7560, +91-33 2530 3148
Email: dmsc@durbar.org
Website:
<http://www.durbar.org/>

Target populations : Female, Male and Transgender sex workers

SAATHII CALCUTTA

Contact person : Pawan Dhall, Chief Coordinator
Address : 229 Kalitala Main Road, Purbanchal (N), Kolkata Pin 700 064
Phone : 033 2334 7329
E-mail : saathii@yahoo.com / pawan30@yahoo.com
Website : www.saathii.org
Target populations : MSM in general, male sex workers, transgender people, bisexual

Sappho

Contact person : Malavika
Address : 11A Jogendra Gardens(South),Ground Floor, Kolkata, Pin 700 078
Phone : 033 2441 9995

Email: malvi99@hotmail.com ,
sappho1999@rediffmail.com
Website:

<http://sapphokolkata.org/>
Target Population : Lesbians and bisexual women

Prantik Bongaon

Contact person : Niloy Basu
Address : C/o Niloy Basu, Peada Para, P.O. Bongaon, Pin 743 235
Phone : 91 3251 257 029, 9332254855
E-mail : ajnil@rediffmail.com / ajnil123@rediffmail.com

Target populations : Hijras, Kothis, MSM in general

Northern Black Rose

Contact person : Souvik Ghosal
Address : C/o Hori Roy, M. B. Mukherjee Nursing Home, Hill Cart Road, Rajani Bagan, Khudiram Palli, Silliguri 734 401
Phone : 91-9433009116
E-mail:
northernblack_rose@yahoo.co.in

Target populations : Hijras, Meitis, other sexual minorities,
Astitva Dakshin

Contact person : Debasish Mitra
Address : C/o Bablu Bajikar, Baruiapur Ukilpara, Kolkata 700144
Phone : 91-9836185589, 9830837440
E-mail :
astitvadakshin@yahoo.co.in
Target populations : Hijras, Kothis

Madhya Banglar Sangram

Contact person : Arunava Nath
Address : Kazi Ali Aftab Vill. Goaljan, P.O. Radharghat, P.S. Berhampore
Phone: 91 9932760967, 9232694700
E-mail:
sangram_06@hotmail.com

SWIKRITI

Contact person : Rajarshi Chakraborty, Secretary

Address : 42/57 DumDum Road, Kolkata 700074

Phone : +91 9831743608, 9433009190

E-mail:
swikriti2003@hotmail.com

Target populations : Bisexual women, lesbians, MSM in general, transgender people
PEOPLE LIKE US (PLUS)

Contact person : Agniva Lahiri
Address : 254, Bonomali Bannerjee Road, Kolkata - 700082, West Bengal, India
Phone : 033 2402 9305

E-mail : pluskolkata@gmail.com
Target populations : Support group for young gender variants

SWAPNIL

Contact person : SUMAN RUDRA
Address : Kotalhat Dist-Burdwan, P.O. Burdwan, Pin 751015, West Bengal

Phone : 09932241372
E-mail :
swapnil_burdwan@yahoo.co.in
Target populations : MSM & TG Groups

MAHARASHTRA

Samapathik Trust, Pune

Contact person : Bindumadhav Khire
Address : Samapathik Trust, 1004 Budhwar Peth, Office No. 9, 3rd Floor, Building Name: Rameshwar Market, Pune
Phone : (020) 6417 9112
E-mail :
samapathik@hotmail.com



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editor@gaylaxymag.com

